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SWANES



*From the Desk of
 Doug Kading*

*“Change,” is it a curse or
 a blessing?*

Most people cringe when they hear the word “change,” because in many cases it also means entering into “unknown” or “unfamiliar” territory. What really bothers us when we hear the word “change” is, how will it affect me and will it be positive or negative?

Another “change” factor is this, “from the time that someone says there will be change until the complete transition of change takes place” we are usually in a state of fear because there is usually a lack of information, and we want facts telling us what was wrong with the old way, what can be done to improve upon it when it has worked so well for so long, and how am I going to have to adapt when this change goes into effect?

“Change” happens all the time. God is the master of change. One major difference that I see is that God does not announce when “change” is coming. When “change” comes from God we are already in the midst it. That kind of change can be a blessing. Why? Because the anticipation factor of “change” is eliminated. When we as Christians realize that we are in the midst of “change” we can become quite worked up about it because there are still unknowns to us, but we can also be comforted because we know that God is in control. We want to be in control but because God Himself is “unchanging” we can trust in Him and He will see us through, even the most difficult “change.”

Outdoor Ministry is “changing” too. People are making conscious choices about where they spend their money, children are making choices about how they are going to spend their summer, and donors are making choices about which non-profits they wish to support.

Camp Okoboji needs people attending camp programs, and Camp Okoboji needs the support of congregations, individuals and groups so that people of all ages might have the opportunity to be strengthened in their faith through outdoor ministry.

“Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a solitary place, where He prayed” (Mark 1:35). Jesus even needed a place to go to speak one on one with His heavenly Father. Camp Okoboji has been and continues to be a place for many people to be one on one with Jesus at the lake.

Please help us to adapt to the “change” that is taking place in outdoor ministry.

*From the Desk of
 Larry Stille*

*Thrivent Community
 Camp Adventure*

For many years, the Aid Association for Lutherans and Lutheran Brotherhood organizations had a rich history of providing financial and volunteer assistance to Lutheran camps and facilities through their respective branch and zone activities. This tradition of support has continued with the merged organization Thrivent Financial for Lutherans through the GivingPlus® program, the Care in Communities and Care in Regions programs, and with special grants.



The event began Friday evening with a cookout and fireside gathering with devotions.

On September 25 - 27 of this year, Camp Okoboji, along with two other local Lutheran camps, had the opportunity to participate in a new pilot program. The Thrivent Community/ Great Plains Associates Office in Sioux City sponsored a weekend camp event at the three Dickinson County Lutheran Camps— Camp Okoboji LCMS, Okoboji Lutheran Bible Camp-ELCA and Lutheran Lakeside Camp-ELCA— for all Thrivent members and their guests. This event was named “Thrivent Community Camp Adventure” and was designed to combine family fun and fellowship together as a Thrivent community with voluntary service at the camp of their choice by each participant. The event was organized by Thrivent Associates Don Schuldt and Pam Bales and was coordinated by Lanette Falk from Calvary

Lutheran (LCMS) in Sioux City.

The event began Friday evening with a cookout and fireside gathering with devotions at Okoboji Lutheran Bible Camp and continued Saturday morning with a volunteer work day at all three camps. Projects were supervised by camp team leaders at each work site. The group reassembled Saturday evening to enjoy a concert by popular singer and songwriter Don Wharton at Camp Okoboji and attended Sunday morning worship services at Camp Okoboji or at Okoboji Lutheran Bible Camp. Volunteers wrapped up the weekend with a facilitated adventure at Lakeside Lutheran following the church services. All events were free to the volunteers and families including lodging, three meals on Saturday, breakfast on Sunday and more.



Each of the three camps received the sum of \$10,000 from the Great Plains Associates to cover supplies, tools, and expenses. Projects completed at Camp Okoboji included re-roofing Meyer Cabin, pouring concrete and construction of storage rooms in the expanded maintenance building, tree removal and trimming, clean-up of a mountain of limbs and branches, installing a privacy fence at the Emmaus Outdoor Worship area, removal of overgrowth with new planting and landscaping at the Bethel Retreat Center, spreading gravel on drives, and painting of inside rooms and outside trim of some cabins. Over sixty volunteers signed in and logged an estimated 375 volunteer hours!

We believe this was a very successful pilot project that encouraged Christian fellowship and volunteerism in the community of faith and provided the financial means to address many needed projects. For these opportunities to serve and build relationships and for many faithful volunteers, we are very grateful and praise God!

*“Teaching, Living,
Sharing, Serving
Jesus Christ, God’s Son,
Our Savior”*

From the Desk of Lori Gamble

I often wonder why more families don’t bring their children to camp. Is it because of finances and the economy? Is it because they haven’t heard of the many opportunities we have to offer families, children, youth, and adults. I sometimes wonder if all the effort put into planning the many events are worth it. Then I come across a story like the following and I know that God is truly present here and the Holy Spirit is working in the hearts of those who come to experience Jesus at the lake. The following story was originally written for Staci’s hometown newspaper. It was mailed to me by another supporter of the ministry here at Camp. I have asked Staci to share her story with the readers of *The Harvest* magazine.

My Summer at Camp Okoboji by Staci Hansen

I have enjoyed attending church camp in Okoboji since I was in third grade. I choose not to go in middle school, which ended up being a bad choice on my part, because I now know all the fun things I have missed out on since sixth grade by not going.

Last year my sister Mal decided to counsel Youth Week for grades 9-12. She convinced me to go along with her and be a camper. I didn’t think I was going to like it at all, but I ended up loving it! I made so many friends there; the unfortunate thing was I got sick in the middle of the week and had to come home early.

This past year I turned 17 and was old enough to be a counselor at camp, so I decided I’d try it out during Junior High Week. At first I was very nervous and wasn’t sure I’d be selected as a counselor, but soon I found out I was selected and very excited to serve. I went to camp on Sunday ready for counselor orientation but didn’t know who I’d be counseling with or any of the campers. I made an instant connection with my co-counselors and loved all of the campers. I’m very happy I decided to counsel; it gave me a sense of maturity knowing I had the responsibility to be in charge of all the campers. I have since decided that I want to counsel again next year, maybe even for a couple different weeks. My sister has told me that she has made some of the greatest friends counseling with people and I truly believe that after I experienced it also.

This summer I also went to camp as a camper for Youth week. I already knew most everyone, so this time I was very ex-



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cited to see all my camp buddies again! I took Chelsie Stephens and Katie Murra, two friends from home, with me so they could experience camp also. Camp is a very relaxing place for me; it's the only place I can go and just feel really good about myself; and I don't have to try to fit in. It's also a place where I'm never judged. That's why I like it so much; everyone is very welcoming and loving. I think camp is something every youth should experience at least once, but I know after one year, they would return the next few years.



At camp we were divided into small groups/teams during the week, and the people on my team are the people I really got to know well. My group name was Emerald. We had small group discussions together and also did team building. One of my favorite things we did was a trust fall off the back deck of the dining hall. The drop was pretty big, and I was very scared! I trusted them all and decided to go for it, and they caught me!

Activities at camp included things from sports to camp fires, and team challenges which were all fun. I got second place in the gummy bear catching contest (in which I caught 70 gummy bears by my teammates throwing them into the air and me catching them in my mouth). We also did a game called "survivor." My team did some very intense challenges, both physical and mental. It lasted a couple hours and my team ended up getting second. We were pretty worn out! For our "fun night" this year we got to go to Arnolds Park. At one point, a whole bunch of us tried getting on the merry-go-round and the operator wouldn't let us go because she said we weighed too much together! There was also a dance and a talent show.

Each night we attended a final devotion at the point. This is a very intense time for many people, with all their emotions coming out. It's very touching to see and be there for people who really are struggling with different issues many other teens go through. This is also something neat at camp, knowing there are other people going through the same things you are and are willing to talk about it.

I know at home I can talk to my friends about things but at camp I feel so comfortable talking to people I just met about anything that's bothering me. Friday night at the point was a very emotional time especially with the songs we sang. "Friends" is the one song that can make everyone cry. It thanks God for all of our friends and it states that the people with me at camp are the greatest friends I got! We have a bond that my friends back home and I don't have, which is God working through us and helping us on our way!

On Saturday we packed up, attended the church service, and then said good-bye to our new and old friends. We all cried because we didn't want to leave each other. It's a very fun week and it leaves so many memories that I can't wait to go back again next year! Hopefully many more will attend next year to experience the things I have.

This is to all the people who attended youth week this summer; our favorite quote of the week!

"All hail Spencer, keeper of the light; All hail Jai, REALLY???"

Now that Staci has shared her story with you, won't you share it with others who don't get *The Harvest*?

Staci Hansen is a high school senior and a member of St. Paul Lutheran Church in Schaller, IA.

From the Desk of Lorene Unrau

Reservations for the Summer of 2010 Family Retreat Facilities

We have changed how the waiting list works for Family Reunions. All openings for 2010 in Bethel Retreat Center and Joppa Hall were sent to everyone on the waiting list in early November. If they found an opening that would work for their family they needed to call the office with their choice by December 1. If two people want the same opening, I refer to the waiting list. The first one on the list will have the opportunity to have their reunion at Camp the summer of 2010. After January 1 all remaining openings will be filled on a first come first served basis. If you are interested in having a family reunion at Camp, call today to get the waiting list form sent to you or go to our website and download it, fill it out and send it to me at Camp. After January 1 check our website for the openings that are available. Give me a call if you find a date that will work for your family.

Family Cabin Facilities

I am in the process of getting a list of open cabins for the summer of 2010 out to all of those on the Family Cabin waiting list. If you are interested in a family cabin for a week during the summer of 2010 call now to have a waiting list form sent to you or download the form from our website. You can check our website after February 1 for a listing of the remaining cabins that will be available this summer. Remember after February 1 all cabins are filled on a first come first served basis.

Volunteers

We rely on the help of many volunteers with all kinds of talents and work skills. We hold both a Fall and a Spring Volunteer Weekend when everyone is invited to come join the fun and fellowship to work together for the good of the Camp. If you are unable to come on those weekends or you are looking for an excuse to come and stay at Camp, you are welcome to come and volunteer anytime. Just give us a call at 712-337-3325.

If you would like to help for more than a day between Labor Day and Memorial Day free housing would be available for you in exchange for your help. If you have a special work skill and would like to be contacted when we are working on a project that could really use your skill, please call and get your name added to our volunteer list. I have a list of volunteers who will help with our large mailings. We have a great time visiting while stuffing.

I also have a volunteer, Dawn Westphal, from Spencer who comes every Tuesday to help out in the office. Mary Stolle, one of the Camp Okoboji Board members, has been volunteering a lot in the office since Labor Day. She has been working hard at correcting addresses and other information in our database. Her husband, Ron, has been doing a lot of carpenter work at Camp. Randy, Maintenance Supervisor, can always use help around Camp. If you find you have some free time and would like to stay at Camp and volunteer just give us a call. A big "Thank You" to all who volunteered at Camp this past year. We appreciate all you have done for us and hope you can help us again in 2010.

*"Teaching, Living, Sharing, Serving
Jesus Christ, God's Son,
Our Savior"*

Auxiliary News Quilt Auction Updates

In the last issue of *The Harvest* I reported a profit of \$17,525 plus \$4,000 from Thrivent. Since my last report a few more donations have come in and we have received the \$4,000 from Thrivent. The total profit from the quilt auction for 2009 is \$21,660.00. This money will be used to put new siding on Joppa Hall. Terry Tesch from Granville has volunteered to put the siding on and with the help of a few other volunteers has at least three fourths of the building done as of this writing. Hopefully by the time you read this he will have the entire project finished. The Auxiliary would like to say THANK YOU to everyone who helped in any way to make this quilt auction another successful fundraiser.

Quilt Auction 2010

At the last board meeting on August 15, the Auxiliary set the date of June 12, 2010 for our 17th Annual Quilt Auction. Several projects were discussed for the profit from this auction but no final decision was made. It will be decided at the November 20 meeting. So ladies get started on those quilts now. Quilt information will be sent to the chairman of the women's group in each congregation in late January 2010. Please be watching for it.

Cherry Pit Bowls For Sale



The Auxiliary has seven cherry pit bowls left for sale that have the picture of the bridge in the bottom of the bowl. The bridge was taken out last fall, so get your remembrance of the bridge now. We will not be reordering. The cost is \$15. You can call the Camp office (712-337-3325) and have one held for you or have one sent to you by paying for the postage.



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